Luxury tourist trains

119. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways have identified routes for running luxury tourists trains in the country on the pattern of palace on wheels etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time frame within which these trains would be available to the tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Luxury Tourist Trains are introduced on the request of State Tourism Corporations/Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) and the routes are decided by the them subject to operational feasibility. There are already 4 trains in operation — Palace on Wheels in association with Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) in Rajasthan/Delhi/Agra area, Heritage on Wheels in association with RTDC in Rajasthan area, Deccan Odyssey in association with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation in Maharashtra/Goa area and Golden Chariot in association with Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation in Karnataka/Goa area. Further, there are 3 new approved projects — one each in association with RTDC, Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board (PHTPB) and IRCTC.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The luxury tourist train in association with RTDC is likely to be introduced during the current financial year. The other two trains are likely to take about 2 years for introduction after PHTPB/IRCTC freeze their requirement in respect of design.

Quality of food served in trains and at stations

120. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of food served in trains and at railway stations has been deteriorating day by day;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the food served on Shatabdi Express were unhygienic and cockroaches and other insects were found in the meals served;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by his ministry in this regard; and

(e) whether any surprise checks are being conducted by any monitoring authority to check the quality of food items served in trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) A few complaints of poor quality of food served in trains have been reported. Action like, counselling, imposition of fine and termination of contracts etc. are taken on complaints found substantiated. Regular checks and inspections are carried out by the officials of zonal railways and Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation.

Plantation of trees along railway tracks

†121. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any plan to plant trees on both the sides of railway lines passing through the cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this plan has been finalized;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the progress made in this regard till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There is no specific scheme for plantation of trees on either side of Railway lines in cities. Railways have a general policy for doing plantation on vacant land.

(b) to (e) Do no arise.

Railway line in Meghalaya

122. SHRI THOMAS SANGMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce any railway line in the State of Meghalaya;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The new line projects taken up in the State are: (i) Dudhnoi-Mendipather (19.75 km.), cost Rs. 89 crore and (ii) Azara-Byrnihat (30 km.), cost Rs. 2.50 crore.

(c) Does not arise.

Setting up of bulk terminals under public private partnership mode

123. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.